

HAMILTON COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONDER



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SUMMER 2003

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Floods in Chattanooga Declared a Disaster

On **May 6, 2003**, Chattanooga residents experienced severe devastation to their property due to the significant amounts of rain that covered the city. The President of the United States declared Hamilton County and several counties in East Tennessee a disaster area. According to

the National Weather Service, Chattanooga had received between 5.5—8.5 inches of rain within 24 hours. High waters and winds closed Hamilton County schools. The Chattanooga Police Department had placed every single barricade to block off flooded streets. The Emergency Operations Center was activated to coordinate agencies in helping the citizens of Chattanooga. Shelters were opened by the American Red Cross to provide a safe refuge for families who had been forced from their homes due to the flooding. Several first

responders offered their boats to help with rescue. The EPB reported over 1,200 people without power throughout the county. The Chattanooga

Metropolitan Airport and East Ridge Hospital were inaccessible for several days. TVA reported the Tennessee

River rose to 4 feet above flood stage. Over 160 commercial buildings were damaged and over 1,000 people were affected by the flood damage. According to FEMA, over 1,000 people in Hamilton County sought financial



Arial Photo of Brainerd Road
By: Director Don Allen
May 8, 2003



Arial Photo of Rossville Blvd.
By: Director Don Allen
May 8, 2003

aid due to flood or storm damage. FEMA and TEMA officials and dozens of Volunteers maintained a strong presence in Hamilton County during the two months following the recent flood disaster.

Thanks to all the Emergency Service personnel who showed excellent teamwork, patience and dedication during this disastrous event. We were able to coordinate the help Hamilton Co. Emergency Management and experienced disaster relief organizations so the people of Hamilton County, whom were in need of help, could receive it in the most timely and effective manner.



Governor Phil Bredsen, Congressman Zach Wamp & County Mayor Claude Ramsey visits with flood victims.

Area Agencies simulate 'chemical attack' to test preparedness



On May 2, 2003, a full, scale drill, simulating a terrorist chemical attack at Finley

Stadium, tested Chattanooga City's Emergency Preparedness as part of Homeland Security. The drill involved more than 200 emergency workers from about 50 local, state and federal agencies. Its purpose was to find how quickly and efficiently area emergency workers could respond to a terrorist attack.

Chattanooga was one of 120 cities that received grant

money from the federal government under the Nunn-Lugar –Domenici Domestic Preparedness Training and Exercise Program.

The drill began at 10:00 a.m. with a loud explosion in Finley Stadium and released a chemical agent into the crowd. Dozens of "injured" people were sprayed by Chattanooga Firefighters to simulate the removal of a blistering agent. Victims were taken by HCEMS to area hospitals.

The Chattanooga Bomb Squad

supplied a robot which took reading for any hazardous material in the air inside the stadium.

The primary purpose of this exercise was to enable participants to assess current response capabilities in the event of a terrorist attack here in Chattanooga. The exercise focused on key local emergency response teams and the integration of state and federal assets necessary to respond to a terrorist incident involving a chemical weapon of mass destruction.

Courthouse employees practice drill with new alarm system.

The horrific events of Sept. 11 point out the need for a workable evacuation plan. Many occupants were able to escape from upper floors of the New York City buildings before they collapsed, but many others were not able to reach a point of safety. Prompt evacuation, no doubt, was an important factor for those who were able to escape in time.

Hamilton County also feels it is an important factor to conduct a prompt evacuation drill for all county buildings.



On June 26, 2003, Hamilton County Courthouse conducted an "unexpected" evacuation drill. "During this



Photo By: Amy Maxwell

evacuation, we used the new fire alarm system for the first time. The employees were surprised but they knew what to do" said Amy Maxwell, Public Information Officer. Everyone evacuated in a timely fashion and congregated at the assembly area within 4 minutes. Agencies participating during this drill were:

Hamilton County Emergency Services, Hamilton

County Risk Management, Hamilton County Sheriff's Department and Chattanooga Fire Department. "The evacuation drill had 3 purposes: to determine the time required to complete the evacuation, to analyze the process and identify problems, and to ensure an orderly and controlled building evacuation through practice," said Ms. Maxwell.

Tennessee Occupational Health and Services (TOSHA) require evacuation drills to be conducted to all county buildings.





EMS AWARDS BANQUET 2003

On May 21, 2003, in conjunction with national E.M.S. week, Hamilton County E.M.S. celebrated 15 years of emergency service with a banquet at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo. Several awards were presented to EMT's and Paramedics for their outstanding service to the community. The awards were as follow:



Paramedic of the Year 2003:

Scott Powell

Paramedic of the Year 2003

Runner-Up: Lt. Billy Blea

Trauma Call of the Year: Lt.

Billy Blea, Paramedic Lanette

Stratton & Paramedic Roger McDiffitt.

Medical Call of the Year:

Captain Wade Batson, Paramedic Stacey Swallows, & Wayne Dedmon

Stretcher Bearer of the Year:

EMT Tracie Shannon, Paramedic Debra Walden, & EMT Mike Hyde.

Grand Blue Ribbon Award:

Kevin Womac

Good Samaritan Award were presented to two employees from the Honor's Golf Course, Mr. John Kinsey & Mr. Mark Fundbark, for their use of a

recently acquired automated external defibrillator on a heart attack victim. Their rapid intervention resulted in the successful resuscitation of the patient.

Awards were presented to several employees for either 3yrs., 6yrs., 9yrs., 12yrs., & 15 yrs. of service to HCEMS.

Congratulations to all!

Mother recognizes medics for saving son's life

Article from:

Chattanooga Times & Free Press

On June 11, 2003, the mother of Taylor Stewart, a young man critically injured in a car accident this spring thanked 3 Hamilton County paramedics who helped save his life. "We wanted to thank Roger (McDiffitt), Lanette (Stratton) and Billy (Blea) here and we wanted to thank the firefighters with Red Bank," said Vicki McGinnis, Mr. Stewart's mother, at a news conference at Medic 6's quarters. The paramedics said they answer about 800 calls a year and rarely get a show of public gratitude. "It's one of those rare things that gives us a reason to keep doing this," said Mr. McDiffitt, a 20-year veteran of emergency response.



Photo By: Lt. Billy Blea

Mr. Stewart, 19, was headed back to his parents' home about 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 27, 2003, when he lost

control of his Honda Accord on McCahill Road and struck a tree head-on. Mr. McDiffitt, 47, said it was one of the worst wrecks he had seen in his career. The car's passenger compartment had been



Photo By: Lt. Billy Blea

deformed by the impact. Mr.

Stewart was unconscious, and his legs were pinned beneath him. It took paramedics and firefighters about 6 minutes to get Mr. Stewart out of the car and another 6 minutes before he was given first aid and was on his way to the hospital, officials said. Mr. Stewart, who said he has no memory of the accident, was unconscious in

the hospital for 4 days. "I had to ask people what I had gone through," said Mr. Stewart, a former member of the state champion Red Bank football team and now a freshman at Chattanooga State Technical Community College. "I'm just glad the paramedics worked fast, otherwise I would probably be dead." Hamilton County EMS has 104 employees who answer about 24,000 9-1-1 calls a year, officials said. Mr. McDiffitt, a former surface miner, said he started his emergency medical career in Wyoming before moving to Denver. He has been in Chattanooga for 7 years. "I started in this business because a 3-year-old boy, my oldest son's best friend, drowned, and I couldn't do anything about it," he said. Ms. Stratton, a 44 year old native of Missouri, came to emergency medicine after stints as a waitress, working for a



Photo By: Amy Maxwell

dealership and as a cook at a middle school. As a single mother, she worked in jobs where she could spend time with her children, she said. When they got older, she saw an opportunity to pursue a career as a paramedic. Ms. Stratton said the visit by Mr. Stewart and his mother to thank her and Mr. McDiffitt was special. "It makes you feel good, and we are glad to help. I just know that there were bigger hands that were guiding me during that call"



Photo By: Lt. Billy Blea



Fire Training ready to start Fall Classes

Hamilton County Fire Training will start Fire Fighter One class in the Fall 2003. Registration will be on Monday, August 4, 2003. Classes will begin on Monday, August 11, 2003 at the Chattanooga Fire Training Center (Amnicola Highway) on Mondays and Wednesday evenings from 6p.m. to 10 p.m. The class will have no more than 24 students.

FireFighter One will consist of the Standard National Fire Protection Agency 1001 code and cover 80 classroom hours and 84 practical hours. The fire cadets will learn fire techniques, fire control, HazMat Awareness, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Fire Safety, Portable Fire Extinguisher attacks, Ventilation techniques, and Search & Rescue.

As long as weather permits, FFI graduation will be November 26, 2003.

For more information, call Captain Rip Rohen or Lieutenant Jody Clift at 209-6900.

**Hamilton County
Fire Training
317 Oak Street, Suite#302
Chattanooga, TN 37403
(423) 209-6900**

Volunteer Agencies put to the test during Flood 2003

By: Lt. Buddy Kamin, Hamilton County Field Services

From the North end to the South end of Hamilton County, we have been affected by a record breaking 30 year flood. Starting Monday, May 5, 2003, the Sale Creek area was hit with 6 inches of rain causing flash flooding. As a result, Sale Creek Volunteer Fire Department was very busy moving and clearing fallen trees, rescuing flood victims, blocking washed out bridges, securing floating LD gas tanks, using pumps to extract water from schools and businesses and even saving the mailman who was stranded while delivering the mail.

As you may know, water flows downhill which explained why the south end of Hamilton County was severely flooded. The water was so high that rescue teams used the Rossville Boulevard exit as a boat ramp. For 48 hours, Hamilton County S.T.A.R.S. and Volunteer State Water Rescue ran 147 assorted water rescue calls. The Chattanooga Fire Department graciously allowed the rescue squads to use old Station #1 (MLK Boulevard) as an operation and staging area for water operations. During this time, 6 to 7 rescue boats were kept busy and 2 to 3 calls were holding until a boat was available. The rescue calls ranged from home evacuations to delivering food to stranded tourists at hotels. The amount of flooded streets were enormous! Chattanooga Police Department and City of Chattanooga Public Works ran out of cones and barricades for road blocks. They eventually used crime scene tape as temporary barricades.

Along with S.T.A.R.S. and Volunteer State, there were 2 agencies that put forth personnel and boats during this tragic event. Among them are: Soddy Daisy VFD and Tennessee Department of Wildlife. The first 24 hours, we responded to 93 water rescue calls. The next 24 hours, we responded to 50 water rescue calls. While delivering food to flood victims on 23rd street, rescue personnel found an elderly male drowning victim. Unfortunately, we were unable to save his life.

A special thanks to the dedicated volunteers who worked together in assisting others in a time of need. Another special thanks to Chattanooga-Hamilton County Rescue for operating 24-hour Rehab. Truck, Chattanooga Fire Department, Soddy Daisy VFD, Tennessee Department of Wildlife and the Salvation Army.

By Lt. Billy Blea

"BATTER UP!"



GAME 1: Walker Co. Fire Dept. versus HCEMS. Walker Co. whipped our "xyz"! They opened up a 13-0 in the first 2 innings. The HCEMS bats were still in bed. The first time thru the line up no one hit the ball out of the infield and only had 2 base runners. It wasn't until the short, chubby offspring of Jade Lockhart, Chase, came to bat in the 5th inning did someone hit the ball out of the infield. Chase contributed the teams' first legitimate hit and preformed outstanding catching and batboy duties. Brian Bricker, the new guy, from Van Buren County, put HCEMS on the board with the first ever infield homerun. Later in the game, another young man, Kyle Maxwell, son of Dan, knocked his dad in after Dan had singled and advanced on an Amy Maxwell single. Basically, the kids provided the only scoring in game one and HCEMS fell miserably to Walker Co. Fire Department 20—2 knocking us into the loser bracket.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES: Lt. Jerry McDonald, fresh from the office and all the pencil pushing, provided a spark with 3 hits in the game. The Maxwell Clan provided entertainment for all and Amy even took pictures.

GAME 2: HCEMS versus ANGEL EMS. Towards the end of the thrashing received by Walker Co. Fire Department, HCEMS's bats started to wake up. HCEMS began to put a few hits together in a row but never could "plate" anyone. HCEMS started on a tear opening up and 11-0 lead in the third inning. Complined with the crafty pitching of the big, right-handed knuckle-baller and the newly arrived offensive attack, ANGEL EMS was finished! Blea had a shut out thru 5 innings with outstanding defense from Scott Coleman, Brian Bricker and the much improved and friend of EMS, all around JED, Scott Pell. Jade Lockhart, slow and unimimidating in every way, proved to be a "gold glove" first baseman providing a concrete defensive foundation on the right side of the infield. Once again, this was a team/family affair with the Maxwell clan providing key base hits and the McDonald brothers, "Big Mac" and "Quarter Pounder" (Jerry and Craig) also contributed to the plate.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES: Shawn Slaughter played excellent defense and made no errors! Bobby Brinkley, "Buckethead", was a rock behind the plate platooning with Chase Lockhart catching. Bobby also beat out an infield hit! Can you believe it!!!!

GAME 3: HCEMS versus Chattooga EMS. Losers Bracket Finals. After a 3-hour break, HCEMS' version of the "boys of summer" took to the field again in the first ever meeting (that anyone could remember) between HCEMS and CCEMS. Fresh and warmed from beating on Hutcheson, CCEMS appeared to be a formidable foe, but once again, pitching defense and early offense were the keys to HCEMS success. After plating 3 runs in the top of the 1st inning, CCEMS scored a 3-run homerun that is probably still flying. HCEMS answered back in the 2nd inning with runs from Bricker, Slaughter and little Lockhart. Outstanding infield play from Scott Coleman and the sure handed Lockhart assisted Blea in holding the CCEMS attack to only those 3 runs for the remainder of the game. Offense was provided by every team player. Shawn Slaughter hit a bullet off the fence in left field for a triple, Blea ripped a bullet to right field for another triple. Overall, HCEMS defeats CCEMS 12-3 and moved to the tournament finals to play Walker County Fire Department.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES: By everyone. HCEMS is just glad to still be walking and relatively uninjured except for extreme soreness in every possible muscle after a 3 hour break. The Lockharts continued their hitting clinic with Chase out hitting DAD! Except for that incredible single by Jade!!!!

GAME 4: HCEMS versus Walker Co. FD

In the waning moments, game 4 rapidly deteriorated due to the weather conditions. The Good Lord had mercy on WCFD and sent forth His rain to nourish the weeds of "Ross Vegas". Ultimately, the game never started and the tournament was cancelled. Since HCEMS lost to WCFD in game 1, HCEMS gladly accepted the 2nd place finish but the tournament director from Hutcheson, Mike Cannon, said, " We have co-champions!" So congratulations are in order to all that came to play and have fun and yes, **HCEMS left as CHAMPIONS!!!**



Prepare:

